

CHAPTER 7

SHORT-TERM USE VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

This chapter compares the potential adverse impacts on the environment associated with short-term use for the Proposed Action and Alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, to the potential adverse impacts on the long-term productivity of the environment in the vicinity of the Bayport Loop Build-Out.

Implementation of the Proposed Action or any of the Build Alternatives would cause some negligible or moderate adverse impacts from short-term disturbance during construction on resources such as groundwater, floodplains, surface water, wetlands, plant communities, fish and wildlife, protected species, air quality, recreation, land use and prime farmlands. With only a few exceptions, which are discussed below, these negligible to moderate impacts would be eliminated or would rapidly diminish upon completion of construction activities.

For the Build Alternatives there is both a short-term use of and a long-term potential threat to groundwater, surface water, wetlands, plant communities, and fish and wildlife resources in the unlikely event of a hazardous waste spill associated with the operation and maintenance of trains utilizing the Build Alternatives. These spill events are not likely to occur. Therefore, the adverse impacts on long-term productivity of the resources that would be affected by a spill can be considered negligible.

Beyond short-term adverse impacts associated with construction and possible, but unlikely impacts resulting from hazardous waste spills, there could be some longer-term adverse impacts to productivity of the environment. However, best management practices and mitigation in accordance with environmental protection regulations would offset these long-term impacts in the case of wetland, floodplain, groundwater, and surface water resources. In the case of wetland functions that would be replaced by mitigation, the long-term impacts would be less than the short-term loss of function as the new wetlands develop into maturity over time. There could be some negligible permanent, long-term loss of productivity from the approximately 4.22 acres of non-jurisdictional wetlands that would be disturbed during the construction of the Build Alternatives and not replaced by wetland mitigation.

There also could be some short-term use and long-term loss of productivity of prime and statewide important farmland as a result of the Build Alternatives. However, the impacted area is negligible according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Losses, fragmentation, and adverse impacts on biological resources, including fish and wildlife, EFH, and protected species would be negligible. The Build Alternatives would have moderate impacts to plant communities. The short-term use of these resources during construction of the Build Alternatives probably would be greater than the long-term productivity losses. However, both can be considered negligible to moderate.

For the No-Build Alternative and the No-Action Alternative there would be no difference between short-term use and long-term productivity, because there would be both a short-term and

a long-term potential threat to surface water, wetland, plant community, fish and wildlife, and other resources. These could be construed as both short-term use impacts and long-term productivity impacts in the unlikely event of a hazardous materials spill associated with the continued operation and maintenance of trains servicing the Bayport Loop.